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ABSTRACT

There are many possible directions that can be taken to open equal opportunity to all who want work, especially for the handicapped. Since more service-producing industries are expected to grow in the future than goods-producing industries, and accurate job forecasting is good but must be accompanied by adequate education and training, the growth of human services and meaningful careers must be encouraged. With plans being made to involve the handicapped in the world of work, additional planning must be made now for the desired changes in the occupational distribution of the handicapped. Eliminating cultural stereotypes, disseminating career information, and earlier training and education are ways to eliminate existing inequalities. Education for careers requires programmatic cohesion and preparation at all educational levels with cooperation among rehabilitation counselors, special educators, career educators, and vocational educators. Revisions in the transportation system, redesign of jobs, buildings, etc., Federal and State laws, fringe benefits, and group health insurance are areas that must be examined for the disincentives they contain for work. Affirmative action means active day to day cooperation between handicapped employees, employers, and the government. (TA)

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## PREPARATION FOR WORK OF THE FUTURE

by


S. Norman Feingold*


As a member of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped for more than two decades, I have seen many gains in the habilitation and rehabilitation of citizens handicapped by a multitude of emotional, mental and physical disabilities. Special training for the disabled, adaptation of the environment, and education of the non-disabled have widened the awareness of the general public to the assets, capabilities, positive accomplishments and present potential of the handicapped for greater participation in the mainstream of society. We cannot rest on our laurels. We have lots to still accomplish. I have been assigned the topic "Preparation for Work of the Future." In the time allotted, one can merely hint at some of the possible directions we can take to open equal opportunity to all who want to work.

### WORK OF THE FUTURE: WHAT WILL IT BE?

The year 2000 will not be a mere extension of the year 1976. The world of work is changing, but it can change even more rapidly. Most of the nation's workers are in industries that produce services such as education, health care, trade, repair, transportation, banking, and insurance. It is expected that by 1984 growth will be faster in the servicing-producing industries than in the goods-producing industries. In 1974 there were approximately 53.7 million people in service industries. The prediction is 71.5 million by 1985. In 1974 there were 28.1 million people in the goods producing industry. This number will grow only slightly in the forthcoming years.

The proportion of the work force in different clusters of occupations has changed dramatically. The farmer represented 30% of employed people in 1900, today about 4%. Thousands of jobs have been taken over by machines, as for example, hand assembly jobs. The elevator operator has been replaced by a machine that can say, "Please step to the rear of the elevator" or "This floor specializes in electrical supplies." How many of you remember the bowling ball attendant who picked up and straightened the pins?

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Government employment has grown faster than any other industry division. Growth has been mostly at the state and local levels. It has increased 70% from 8.4 million to 14½ million between 1960 and 1974. White collar workers outnumber blue collar workers by almost 12 million people.

More accurate job forecasting is good but must be accompanied by adequate education and training. At the same time, we've got to encourage the growth of human services and meaningful careers.

We need people-helping-people jobs and careers. In my judgment, by the year 2000, the following may be possible in spite of the bottom line financial implications:

- At least one million more people could be used and trained in human services for employment by nursing homes. At present, no psychologists, no counselors and very few trained social workers are employed in such homes. My thrust would be a new specialist trained in the human services field. I can recall being a part of a group that helped both counseling psychology and rehabilitation counseling become a profession.
- One million additional workers can be trained in human services to work in each of the following areas: recreation centers, day care centers for youth and aging, apartments and hotels for the aging, retirement villages, educational parks and leisure technology.
- Two million additional mental health technicians will be needed in order to help individuals cope with increasing stress resulting from the rapid technological changes occuring within our society.
- Health spas could use half a million more workers trained in services with specialized health knowledge and skills.
- Approximately one-hundred thousand futuristic counselors and one-hundred-fifty thousand technological displacement counselors will be needed in a wide variety of work settings.
- Career counseling in specialized settings will be in great demand. Approximately two-hundred-fifty thousand counselors could be employed effectively in prisons, hospitals, geriatic centers, etc.
- Two-hundred-fifty thousand counselors especially trained to work with the severely handicapped. This is a top government priority. Many of these new counseling careers can be fulfilled most adequately by the handicapped. Peer counseling of the handicapped can open new job vistas.
- Five-hundred thousand trained home workers could take care of severely handicapped people who could then live and work in their homes, or pursue an avocation that can be self-actualizing. We can find and create jobs and careers to match the rich human resources of our country. The cost for such a program would be far less than having the equivalent people live in institutions.

Following are four other areas where needs and opportunities are projected. At the University of Rochester, for example, the University and the business community are exploring new kinds of work that the deaf can do successfully, and at the same time breaking down job stereotypes. I fully realize the tremendous bottom line of these thrusts. The decision is whether or not people are our most precious resource.

- Ocean farming will be in greater demand as the scarcity of land food becomes more apparent. One hundred thousand workers can be employed in the search and research for and utilization of other sources of food.

- We need more readable signs on our roads. There is no uniform code for traffic signs among our fifty states. Many accidents can be traced to poorly posted directions. Thousands and

thousands of workers could be employed researching, revising, repairing and building better signs.

- Five-hundred thousand conservation technicians trained in research and specialized ecological services will be needed.

- Thousands of people will be employed in projected space colonies. The handicapped must have a role in this new high frontier.

Certainly the growth, small as it may be, within certain occupational areas gives us an indication of new careers as well as the inter-disciplinary approach into the world of work for the future. Many new career fields have already been developed over the past several decades. A few examples include: selenologists (people who study the moon), manpower analysts, solar physicists, environmental system engineers, resource teachers, teacher assistants, physician's assistants, diagnostic prescriptive teachers, celestial mechanics scientists, medical bio-ethics personnel, placement specialists, nuclear medicine technologists, developmental biologists, health physicists, behaviorists, dermatobiologists, structural protein chemists, earthquake engineers, technology forecasting specialists, educational development officers, tissue culture technicians, plant biochemists, algae physiologists, neo-biologists, clinical biochemists, chemist-pharmacologists, avian biologists or futurists. I remember the time when there were just a very few futurists at most. There is a great need for legitimate masseuses and masseurs. It is interesting that in Taiwan, the first opportunity at the job of masseuse and masseur goes to the blind.

Twice as many women have entered law and medical schools in the last five years because of the feminist movement. Men are going into nursing. Sexist roles and stereotypes too often assigned to the world of work are gradually being weakened. Noticeable gains were made by women and minorities this year. We know that there has been an increase in the percent of handicapped students entering college but the exact statistics are not available.

## PLANNING TAKES PLACE ON MANY LEVELS

The changes we wish in the occupational distribution of the handicapped must be planned for now. For the future is now, and the handicapped can make the future a brighter one. Contributions of the handicapped are part and parcel of our 200 years. We cannot permit the present inequities to continue.

There are no reliable statistics of the percentage of handicapped people who are unemployed even in good times, but we do know that it is considerably higher than among the general working population. Moreover, studies of salary levels show that the average wages of handicapped persons are well below the wages of the non-handicapped.

A lot depends on the cultural stereotypes. A person subject to epileptic seizures in a primitive society may become an outstanding medicine man, but in our society is rejected as a school teacher on the grounds that the children will be frightened if the teacher has a seizure.

Handicapped individuals need to know how to utilize information, scientific, technical, and social. Videotape, cable and educational TV, other emerging media such as sophisticated home study are tools to widen the dissemination of pertinent information and relevant experience. Parnes' research at Ohio State University points up that the more information people have about jobs and careers, the higher their salary level. Meaningful career and job choices are most likely to occur with adequate exploration and experiences; career guidance emphasizes the importance of the latter. Some areas where planning needs to take place now are:

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Earlier training and education is an area of exploration for the experts in the field of early childhood education. Professional day care centers were needed yesterday. Of the eight million school-age children, 5-17, about 1 out of 10 are handicapped. Babysitting service is no substitute for day care centers. While what happens prior to adolescence affects the adolescent and post-adolescent, it is in this age group—the over 12-year old—that my training and experience are concentrated.

## EDUCATION FOR CAREERS

Career education represents an area of accountability in the total education of handicapped children and youth. It can begin with pre-school experiences and continue through adulthood in the realistic formulation of career or leisure goals and associated attitudes, habits, and skills. This is true for all people. A longitudinal approach requires programmatic cohesion and preparation at all educational levels with much more cooperation among vocational rehabilitation counselors, special educators, career educators and vocational educators. It also requires the concerted effort of students, parents, and all professionals. A program of this kind rests heavily upon openness and sharing of knowledge by everyone concerned. It requires a responsiveness to aptitudes, interests and particular uniqueness of the handicapped individual by those people who are responsible for education, as well as by parents and employers. Cooperation among regular educators, special educators, and career, and vocational educators and the total community is particularly essential.

Let me propose that we have new kinds of innovative schools and new kinds of education. Even though many more schools and colleges have widened and increased facilities for the handicapped, and mainstreaming is evidenced, we still need more sophisticated breakthroughs for the handicapped in many areas. Examples are schools without walls, advanced study by mail, college credit by examination, and credit for all kinds of experience. We must also make certain that credentialism does not keep handicapped people with ability, interest and potential from gaining access to an education that has, or can have, a job and a career at the end of the line. Training and education for the handicapped without any job or career at the end of the line is a rip-off, which today not just the handicapped face.

- Transportation.

Unless the trained individual can come to this job, the end of the line is a rip-off. We can place astronauts on the moon, but we haven't yet developed a local transportation system that all people may use. The elderly, the arthritic, the wheelchairbound, to name a few, can't negotiate the steps in busses, assuming they live in a city with bus transportation. The blind, the epileptic, cannot drive themselves. It may be a combination of transportation services that will make it possible for more handicapped to work.

In Washington, D.C., the first four miles of the subway recently opened. It has taken all sorts of community action and monitoring to make it accessible for the handicapped. Some of the handicapped require very expensive vans with hydraulic lifts or other specialized services. Unless they can work at a job that pays enough to afford this available expensive equipment, they remain unable to work.

- Redesign of jobs, buildings, etc.

It has been done and it can be done. It takes cooperation among industry and the engineer, the rehabilitation agencies, the legislators, the employer, the handicapped, and the state vocational rehabilitation agencies that have the mandate to actively integrate the handicapped into the mainstream. It can and must be done. Pressure must be exerted by the handicapped themselves. It can't be done by just

talking to one another but to those who can make the needed changes. As a psychologist, I am convinced that further accessibility of the handicapped in every area—housing, work, recreation, etc.—would have great psychological implications for the self-respect and self concept of the handicapped.

- Federal and State laws.

We need to examine in depth our social security, Medicaid and Medicare, public assistance and workmen's compensation. It will probably have to be legislated and litigated. They have or may have built into them disincentives to work. We need to obtain the facts and publicize them and make changes when necessary.

There's a woman I know who works as a volunteer because if she received a salary, she would lose lots of benefits she needs to live in an apartment rather than in an institution. Biomedical engineers have developed the gadgetry to enable her to use her mental capabilities, but the financial expenditures required for her equipment, special training, attendant care, etc., is beyond her earning potential.

- Fringe benefits and group health insurance.

We need to examine these issues in detail and in great depth. Are some employers using this as an excuse not to hire the handicapped? If there is a justifiable and identifiable reason for denying employment because of fringe benefits and insurance, then we need to develop ways to overcome these reasons through reinsurance or guarantees. We need to have the complete facts.

## TENTATIVE CONCLUSION

As we participate at the annual meeting of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped I hope we will explore actions for this committee to take toward developing meaningful preparation for work of the future. Each of you, I hope, will go back to your local community geared for action. Don't be discouraged by those who say it cannot be accomplished. Such people have always been with us.

In 1889, the Director of the U.S. Patent Office asked President McKinley to abolish the Patent Office, along with his own job, because "everything that can be invented has been invented." In 1926, Lee DeForest, a pioneer in the development of the radio, stated, "While theoretically and technically television may be feasible, commercially and financially I consider it an impossibility, a development of which we need waste little time dreaming." Predictions for TV and the industry it sponsored were far too conservative by leading scientistis. The science fiction of my youth is already a reality and Buck Rogers is obsolete.

Bishop Wright said that "If God wanted us to fly he would have given us wings." Orville and Wilbur Wright, his sons, started the air industry.

Affirmative action means active day to day cooperation between handicapped employees, employers, and the government. Affirmative action also means obtaining the facts with more consumer input in those areas where barriers to work for the future exist in education, transportation, environment, existing laws, fringe benefits and legitimate career opportunities.

Once the facts are obtained, a plan of action to maximize the positives, minimize the negatives, and change any discrimination in existing laws and attitudes can be creatively initiated. The discussions here

this week can be a major start on squarely meeting the issues surrounding Preparation for Work of the Future–for the future is now. We could use 1000 more "Hank Viscardis" today.

For even though we may ultimately move towards a leisure society, for most people, including the handicapped, one's role, status, and function, is determined to a great extent by one's work. Career and job placement is a top priority in my book. The handicapped, through lifelong education, can continue to live significantly. Every person has the right to become all that she or he is capable of becoming. Every person is a VIP and can make a contribution to one's self, family and society. Seneca, many centuries ago, summed it up when he said, "As long as you live, keep learning how to live."

In conclusion I would like to quote Robert Frost from his poem, "The Road Not Taken":

"I still will be telling this with a sigh
Sometimes ages and ages hence.
Two roads diverged in a wood–
I took the one less traveled by
And That has made all the difference."

Let us continue to have this choice and maintain unity through diversity.



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